

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2018-06-10 13:16:59
Observer's Name	Jeff Hopkins
E-mail	laniusexcubitor1960@gmail.com
Phone	6107760189
Observer's Address	1225 Pericles Pl. Whitehall Pennsylvania 18052 United States
Names of additional observers	Kevin Dougherty (he was not present with me, but he took pictures a few hours later which document the ID).
Species (Common Name)	Arctic Tern
Species (Scientific Name)	Sterna paradisaea
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Adult breeding
Observation Date and Time	05-20-2018 9:00 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	My checklist: https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45858076 ; Kevin Dougherty's checklist (with photos): https://ebird.org/pa/view/checklist/S45879995
County	Lehigh
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Lynn Townshp
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Leaser Lake, West Parking Area (Follweiler Court)
GPS coordinates of sighting	40°40'8.35"N, 75°50'12.37"W
Habitat	Mostly perched on the railing of an artificial fishing pier on a forested lakeshore
Distance to bird	Approx. 80 yards
Viewing conditions	Clear sunny day, bird was in the sun, but i was in the shade.
Optical equipment used	Swarovski SLC 8x42 binoculars, Leica APO Televid 77 scope.

Description	<p>Small sterna tern in breeding plumage. Complete black cap with a dark eye and white cheeks. It had a small thin, blood red bill without a black tip and bright red legs. The breast was white or off-white, and the mantle was light grey. The wingtips when perched were a slightly darker grey than the mantle. In flight, the tips of the primaries on the upper wing were dark (grey or black).</p> <p>This was essentially the description I posted in eBird on the date of the observation. I did not look at any field guides or online information until last night (June 9th).</p>
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	<p>Mostly, the bird was perched on the metal railing of the fishing pier just looking out at the lake. Occasionally it would preen its back or armpits. After standing there for about 15 minutes it flew north along the lake and out of sight. Based on Kevin's pictures it returned to the same perch later that day.</p>
Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)	<p>Bill was deep red (eliminates Royal, Elegant, Least, and Forster's). The bill did not have a black tip (eliminates Common and Forster's). The bird was too small to be a Caspian or a Royal, and the bill was also too small for those. FTR, also not a Black, Whiskered, or White-winged.</p>
Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:	<p>To be honest, I originally concluded the bird was a Common Tern, because there was a Common seen the week before at the same lake. I did not make any observations about the leg height or length of the tail streamers at the time. But after reviewing some pictures comparing Arctic and Common last night and then comparing those with Kevin D's pictures, I decided it was an Arctic.</p> <p>Based on Kevin's pictures, the legs are very short and the bill clearly does not have a black tip (as I originally observed). There are also pictures of the Common from May 14th. That bird does have a black tipped bill, and both its bill and legs are longer than those of the May 20th bird. Clearly they are not the same bird.</p> <p>I also forwarded Kevin's pictures to Jason Horn, who had seen the previous Common. He agreed with the ID of Arctic.</p>
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	<p>Yes. After looking closely at Kevin's pictures, I believe there's no other options.</p>
During	<p>None</p>
After	<p>Various online comparisons of Common and Arctic Terns, although most of those were of European birds.</p>
Supporting evidence (check all that apply)	<p>Photograph</p>
Click to edit	<p>PORC-webform00503</p>